

Application Serial No.: 10/803,701
Amdt. dated February 28, 2007
Reply to Non-Final Office Action of December 6, 2006

REMARKS/ARGUMENTS

The Office Action dated December 6, 2006 and the references cited therein have been carefully considered. In response to the Office Action, Applicant has canceled Claims 6, 7 and 14 and amended Claims 1, 8, 9 and 10 which, when considered with the remarks set forth below, are deemed to place the case with Claims 1, 3-4, 8-10 and 12-13 in condition for allowance.

In the Office Action, Claims 1, 3-4, 6, 10 and 12-13 have been rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over U.S. Patent No. 6,931,110 to Bates, et al. in view of newly-cited U.S. Patent No. 5,315,649 to Foster, et al. In particular, the Examiner states that the Bates patent discloses a method and system for placing a telephone call from a caller using a prepaid phone card wherein a speech recognition application is utilized to identify the caller. The Examiner admits that the Bates patent does not disclose the step of receiving voice input from the caller in the form of a desired call connection and comparing the voice print associated with the call connection stored in a database. In this regard, the Examiner has cited a new reference, namely the Foster patent, as teaching a calling card toll service system that enables a caller to speak his/her personalized identifier for a person or a destination associated with the telephone number. The system compares the voice input from the caller with a voice recognition subsystem and places the call if the voice input matches the stored template. The Examiner concludes that it would have been obvious to incorporate the voice recognition subsystem with Forster with the calling card system disclosed by Bates to arrive at the claimed invention.

The remaining Claims 7-9 and 14 have been rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over the Bates patent in view of the Forster patent and further in view of U.S. Patent No. 6,529,593. Specifically, the Examiner notes that neither the Bates nor the Forster patent discloses a database accessible by the caller via the internet for storing and modifying personalized prepaid phone card information. However, the Examiner cites the Nelson patent as disclosing this feature. Accordingly, the Examiner concludes that it would have been obvious to combine this feature as suggested by the Nelson patent with the systems described in the Bates and Forster patents.

In response, Applicants have amended independent Claims 1 and 10 to further define the method and system for placing a telephone call from a caller using a prepaid phone card according to the present invention. The claimed method and system involve three distinct security steps to verify that the caller is authorized to make the requested call. The caller is first identified based on the origination of the initial telephone call. This is done by comparing the origination of the initial telephone call with a telephone number associated with the prepaid phone card previously stored in a database. If there is a match, the caller is next prompted to vocally input a personal identification number (PIN) associated with the prepaid phone card. If the voice input from the caller in the form of the PIN spoken by the caller matches a PIN associated with the prepaid phone card previously stored in the database, the caller is next prompted to vocally input a desired call connection. The caller then vocally inputs a desired call connection which is compared with a personal voice print associated with the call connection and assigned to the caller's phone card and previously stored in the database. Only after all of these steps is the desired call placed. In addition, the database having all of the caller's information is accessible by the caller via the internet for enabling or activating the call origination verification step and for storing and modifying the PIN and the personalized voice print with respect to the call connection.

It is respectfully submitted that none of the cited prior art references, taken alone or combined, discloses a method for placing a telephone call involving all of the caller verification steps set forth above. It is further respectfully submitted that none of the cited prior art references, taken alone or combined, discloses a method for placing a telephone call involving a database having personalized prepaid phone card information stored therein which is accessible by the caller via the internet for enabling or activating the call origination verification step and for storing and modifying the PIN and the personalized voice print with respect to the call connection, as defined in amended Claims 1 and 10.

In particular, as noted by the Examiner, the Bates patent does not disclose receiving voice input from the caller in the form of a desired call connection and comparing the voiceprint associated with the call connection stored in the database. It is further noted that the Bates patent does not disclose receiving voice input from the caller in the form of a personalized identification number (PIN) and comparing the PIN spoken by the caller with a PIN stored in a database. Finally, while the Bates system checks if use from a specified

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telephone number is enabled, there is no mention in the Bates patent of a database which is accessible by the caller via the internet to enable the identification step or to store and modify the caller's origination telephone number, PIN or voiceprint.

Turning to the Foster patent, there is no teaching or suggestion in this patent of identifying a caller based on the origination of the initial telephone call, nor is there any reference to comparing the origination of the initial telephone call with a telephone number associated with the prepaid phone card previously stored in a database. Also, the Foster patent does not disclose a database that is accessible by the caller via the internet for enabling or activating the call origination verification step and for storing and modifying the PIN and the personalized voice print with respect to the call connection.

While the Nelson patent discloses a prepaid phone service utilizing the internet, this service is provided for receiving and adjusting prepayment of telecommunication services. There is no mention in this patent of using the internet to access a prepaid phone card database for the purpose of enabling or activating a caller origination verification step, or for storing or modifying a caller origination telephone number, as defined in amended Claims 1 and 10.

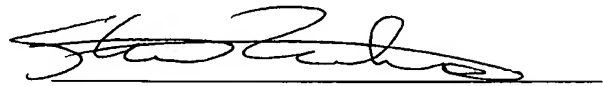
In contrast, the present invention involves a method wherein a caller stores in a database a caller origination telephone number, a PIN and a voice print with respect to a particular call connection, which is all associated with a prepaid phone card. Specific verification steps are undertaken to ensure that the caller is authorized to make the desired call. In addition, the database is accessible to the caller via the internet to enable the caller origination verification step and to store and/or modify the caller's personal information. There is no teaching or suggestion of all of these combined features in either the Bates patent, the Foster patent or the Nelson patent, taken alone or combined. Accordingly, it is respectfully submitted that Claims 1 and 10, as amended, and the claims that depend therefrom patentably distinguish over the prior art.

In view of the foregoing amendment and remarks, favorable consideration and allowance of the application with Claims 1, 3-4, 8-10 and 12-13 are respectfully solicited. If the Examiner believes that a telephone interview would assist in moving the application

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toward allowance, he is respectfully invited to contact the Applicants' attorney at the telephone number listed below.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Steven T. Zuschlag', written over a horizontal line.

Steven T. Zuschlag
Registration No.: 43,309
Attorney for Applicant

HOFFMANN & BARON, LLP
6900 Jericho Turnpike
Syosset, New York 11791
(516) 822-3550
STZ/mf
233830_1